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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

SOCCER STARS

Gotham FC wins the NWSL championship p18

DID YOU KNOW?
The UN has six main branches, including the General Assembly, International Court of Justice, and Security Council.

A UN Security Council meeting on November 17

Schools reopening

During the war in Gaza, more than 600,000 Palestinian children have not been able to go to school. Since the ceasefire in October, UN officials have been working to create makeshift classrooms, noting that it's important for students' education and mental health to return to school as soon as possible.

UN approves peace plan for Gaza

On November 17, the Security Council of the United Nations (UN, organization of 193 nations) approved a peace plan to end the war between Israel and Hamas (a terrorist group based in Gaza, a Palestinian territory). This follows a ceasefire (pause in fighting) agreement that went into effect in October.

What happened?

The Security Council is the main group within the UN that is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. It has 15 member nations, and its decisions must be followed by all UN member countries. In a 13–0 vote at UN headquarters in New York City, the council approved a 20-point resolution aimed at ensuring lasting peace and rebuilding Gaza, which has been devastated by the two-year war. The plan was created by President Donald Trump's administration. Member countries that voted in favor included the US, the UK, France, and Somalia. Two members of the council, Russia and China, declined to vote but did not reject the plan.

Mike Waltz

What is in the plan?

The plan calls for the creation of an International Stabilization Force (ISF), a peacekeeping unit consisting of military troops from multiple countries. The White House described the ISF as a "long-term internal security solution." The ISF would build and train a Palestinian police force, protect Gazans, secure the borders, and carry out the process of disarming Hamas. Once the ISF is fully functioning, Israel would remove all its troops from inside Gaza. When *The Week Junior* went to press, Indonesia and Azerbaijan had committed to joining the ISF, and other countries expected to participate included Egypt and Turkey. The plan also calls for the creation of a Board of Peace, which would oversee the ISF, humanitarian aid distribution, and the rebuilding of Gaza. The board would be led by Trump and likely include former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. Other members have not been identified.

Who will be in charge of Gaza?

According to the peace resolution, a committee of 15 politically neutral Palestinians will be formed to handle the day-to-day running of Gaza, with support from the ISF. The plan calls for the Board of Peace to remain in place until the end of 2027, when a governing group called the Palestinian Authority (PA) would take over. Hamas cannot have any role in governing Gaza, and its facilities will be destroyed. The resolution also stated that once Gaza is secure and the PA is in charge, Palestinian statehood could be possible. Statehood is controversial, with many countries supporting it and others, including Israel and the US government under Trump, opposing it.

How did people react?

Mike Waltz, the US ambassador to the UN, called the resolution a "lifeline" for Gaza that is "charting a new course for Israelis, Palestinians, and all the people in the region alike." António Guterres, the secretary general of the UN, said the plan cleared the way for "concrete and urgently needed steps on the ground." Benjamin Netanyahu, prime minister of Israel, reiterated that Israel does not support Palestinian statehood. "Our opposition to a Palestinian state in any territory has not changed," he said. Hamas leaders opposed the plan, saying it "imposes an international guardianship mechanism" on Gaza. Security Council members including France, Guyana, Pakistan, Slovenia, and Somalia said they had approved the plan to help Gazans but that lasting peace would only be achieved with Palestinian statehood.

What will happen next?

Officials will work to stabilize Gaza and get the ISF up and running. A panel of international political and economic experts will develop a plan to "rebuild and energize Gaza," an effort that is estimated to cost more than $70 billion.

Frida Kahlo work breaks record

A painting by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo sold for $54.7 million on November 20. According to Sotheby's, the auction house that sold it, it is the highest price paid for a work by a female artist as well as the highest price for a work by any Latin American artist. The painting, called *El sueño (La cama)*, which means "The Dream (The Bed)" in Spanish, was sold to an unknown buyer.

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) was famous for her self-portraits, in which she expressed her thoughts, emotions, and pain. Kahlo, who suffered from long-term illnesses, created the painting as her health was worsening. In it, she is seen resting on a bed with a skeleton hovering above her.

"This record-breaking result shows just how far we have come, not only in our appreciation of Frida Kahlo's genius but in the recognition of women artists," said Anna Di Stasi, a Sotheby's official. The previous top sale for a female artist was *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*, by Georgia O'Keeffe, which sold for $44.4 million in 2014.

El sueño (La cama)

Bana Alabed holding the Nkosi Statuette, which accompanies her prize

WOW! Past winners of the Children's Peace Prize include climate activist Greta Thunberg and Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai.

Prestigious honor for Syrian teen

Bana Alabed, a 15-year-old from Syria, won the 2025 International Children's Peace Prize on November 19 for her activism on behalf of children living in war zones. The prize recognizes young people who fight for the rights of other children around the world, and winners receive money for their education and work. The prize is awarded by the KidsRights Foundation, a humanitarian organization based in the Netherlands.

Alabed's childhood was shaped by the Syrian civil war. The battle for control of the country was between Bashar al-Assad, Syria's former authoritarian (one ruler with total power) leader, and opposition groups. Nearly 14 million Syrians were forced to leave their homes.

When she was a child, Alabed received international attention for her social media posts documenting her wartime experiences and her desire for peace. She and her family were later evacuated to Turkey, where she still lives.

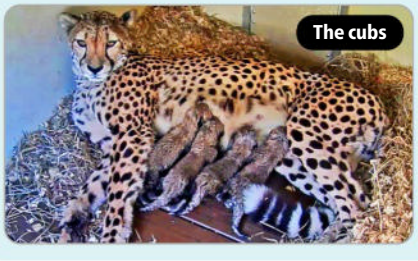
Alabed runs educational programs for children in refugee camps (places where people live after they are forced to flee their homes to escape danger). She is also working to rebuild homes and schools in Syria and help reunite 5,000 Syrian children with their families after they were separated during the war. She wrote the books *Dear World* and *My Name Is Bana* about her life.

At a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden, Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkol Karman presented the prize to Alabed. "This honor is more than recognition, it's a responsibility—a promise to speak for the children whose voices are too often silenced," Alabed said. "Every child's voice matters."

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

A SHUTDOWN SURPRISE

Smithsonian's National Zoo in Virginia announced that four cheetah cubs were born during the government shutdown, while the zoo was closed. The animals are considered vulnerable to extinction in the wild.



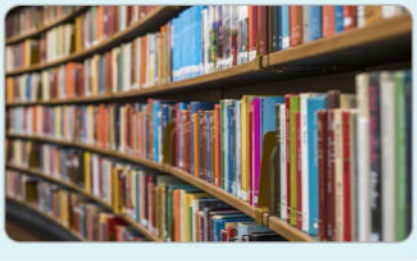
The cubs

GIVING IT A GO

Guinness World Records (GWR) celebrated its annual World Records Day on November 20, inviting people across the globe to try for a new title. "No matter what your passion or skill, there is a record to be broken," said an official at GWR, which is marking its 70th anniversary this year.

LINING THE SHELVES

Berkshire Community College in Massachusetts was set to reopen its library after a renovation when staff discovered that 40,000 books had been ruined in storage. Individuals, schools, and other libraries stepped in to donate thousands of books and dollars. "Libraries have a special place in people's hearts," one donor said.



ON THE COVER: GETTY IMAGES (4); KRAFTON; COURTESY HA AUCTIONS; ON THIS PAGE: INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S PEACE PRIZE; AP; SMITHSONIAN'S NATIONAL ZOO; GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

A Northern spotted owl
A monarch butterfly
A Florida manatee
A wolverine
NATIONAL TREASURE
The bald eagle was one of the first species to be protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1973.

A landmark law

President Richard Nixon (above), a Republican, signed the Endangered Species Act into law in 1973, after almost all Democrats and Republicans in Congress voted for it. The law is considered a major achievement because 99% of the species it has protected have avoided extinction.

Uncertainty over animal protections

The administration of President Donald Trump announced changes it wants to make to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to reduce government regulation. The ESA is a federal law that protects species threatened with extinction.

What happened?

New rules were proposed that would make it easier for logging, mining, and oil drilling to take place in habitats where endangered species live. The rules are similar to changes Trump made to the ESA during his first Presidential term (2017–2021), which were later reversed by President Joe Biden (2021–2025). Two of the proposals were announced jointly with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

What would the changes do?

One change would allow the government to assess economic factors—such as lost revenue from a ban on oil drilling near an animal's habitat—before deciding whether to list an animal as endangered. Another rule would make it harder to protect species from threats that could occur in the future, such as from the effects of climate change. The definition of a "critical habitat" would also be narrowed by excluding areas where a species previously lived, and species in a habitat that are "threatened" would no longer receive the same protections as those that are "endangered."

How did people react?

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum, who is responsible for conserving federal land, said the rules would ease requirements that burden landowners and businesses. Western Energy Alliance, a group that represents oil and gas companies, said it was happy with the rules. Conservationists criticized the changes for weakening the power of the ESA. They could threaten "some of America's most beloved wildlife," said Stephanie Kurose of the environmental group Center for Biological Diversity, including the species shown above.

What will happen next?

The government is seeking public comments on the changes for 30 days. After that, the Trump administration will finalize the new rules, a process that could take two years. Conservation groups said they expect to file lawsuits (legal disputes) to prevent the changes from going into effect.

WORD OF THE WEEK

TAXI

The word "taxi" is based on the Latin word *taxa*, meaning "to charge." It is a shortened version of "taxicab," a car that charges passengers an amount based on the distance they travel. "Cab" is short for "cabriolet," which originally described a small horse-drawn carriage with a hood and today describes a car with a folding roof.

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

December 4, 1918

First President takes trip to Europe

On December 4, 1918, President Woodrow Wilson (1913–1921) sailed to Paris, France, on the SS George Washington, becoming the first US President to visit Europe while in office. Wilson went overseas to negotiate the peace treaty that would establish the terms of the end of World War I (1914–1918). He was there for several months, and the Treaty of Versailles was signed in July 1919.

President Woodrow Wilson

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES (6); ON RIGHT PAGE: DANA ROGERS/ JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION; COURTESY OF THE PUBLISHERS; GETTY IMAGES (2); NPS; COURTESY HA AUCTIONS

Lainey Wilson

Country music awards given

The 59th annual Country Music Awards were presented on November 19 in Nashville, Tennessee. The host was singer-songwriter Lainey Wilson, who also won Album of the Year, Female Vocalist of the Year, and Entertainer of the Year, the most prestigious prize of the night. Other winners included Post Malone, Cody Johnson, and Brooks & Dunn. In an acceptance speech, Wilson thanked her fans for making her dreams come true.

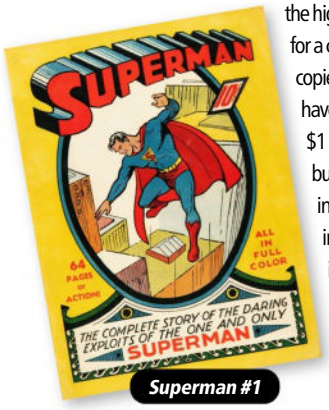
The old (left) and new bridges

Yellowstone Park's new bridge

A new bridge in Yellowstone National Park has opened to cars. The bridge, which crosses the Yellowstone River in Montana, replaces one that was in disrepair and will make it easier for people to visit the park in all seasons. Funds from the Great American Outdoors Act, a 2020 law to support national parks, enabled the construction, which began in 2023. The old bridge will be removed next year.

Sale of comic is most ever paid

An original copy of the first edition of the first *Superman* comic, from 1939, was sold at auction for $9.12 million, the highest price ever paid for a comic book. Other copies of *Superman #1* have sold for more than $1 million at auctions, but this one, discovered in a box in an attic in California, was in almost perfect condition, making it extremely rare. The copy originally sold for 10 cents.



Superman #1

Alice Wong in 2024

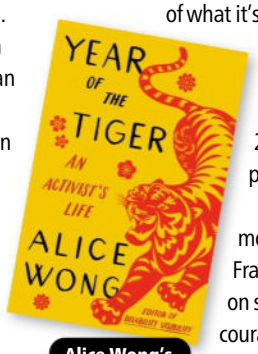
DID YOU KNOW?
Approximately 61 million people in the US live with at least one disability.

Disability activist is remembered

Alice Wong, an activist and author, died on November 14 at age 51. Born with muscular dystrophy, a condition that causes muscle loss and weakness, she spent her life fighting for equal access and rights for people with disabilities.

Wong was born in Indiana in 1974 to parents who had immigrated from Hong Kong. Muscular dystrophy began to affect her ability to walk in elementary school. After graduating with degrees from Indiana University, she moved to San Francisco to earn a master's degree from the University of California, San Francisco. She went on to work as a researcher there, studying ways to improve services and opportunities for people with disabilities.

In 2014, Wong launched the Disability Visibility Project, interviewing disabled Americans about their lives. The project was intended to last for a year but was so successful that Wong kept it going, eventually recording hundreds of oral histories from people talking about their challenges and achievements. The interviews are now housed at the Library of Congress, and some of them are highlighted in *Disability Visibility*, a book Wong published in 2020.



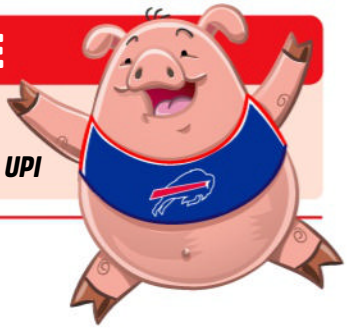
Alice Wong's memoir

Wong served for more than 10 years on the National Council on Disability, helping to shape policies to make schools, workplaces, and public spaces more inclusive. In 2022, she published *Year of the Tiger*, a memoir that provided a glimpse of what it's like to fight for disability justice and became a bestseller. After receiving a MacArthur Fellowship, known as a "genius grant," in 2024, Wong said, "Storytelling is a powerful form of resistance."

People across the country mourned Wong's passing. San Francisco mayor Daniel Lurie wrote on social media that her "activism and courage inspired countless people." He encouraged people to continue her work so that "every voice is heard, every space is accessible, and every resident can thrive." Sandy Ho, a fellow activist, said Wong's legacy is that people with disabilities "speak for themselves and that nobody speaks for us."

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Loose pig named Breakfast causes chaos in Buffalo, NY, neighborhood" *UPI*

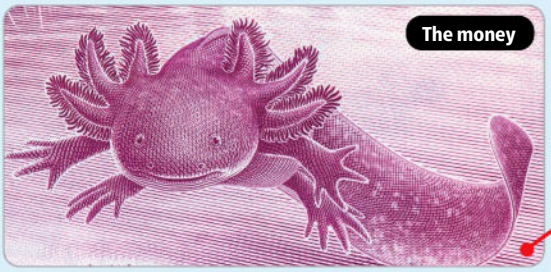


Around the world

La Pascaline

Paris, France
Sale of famous calculator blocked

A court in Paris has prevented the sale of what is believed to be one of the first calculators ever invented. The device, known as La Pascaline, was developed in 1642 by Blaise Pascal, a French mathematician, and could do addition and subtraction. It was expected to be sold at auction for at least $2.3 million, but experts argued that the historic calculator is a national treasure and must remain in France.


The money

Mexico
People hold onto axolotl cash

The Bank of Mexico said that 12.9 million people are keeping paper money that features an axolotl, a salamander native to Mexico. The 50-peso bill, worth about $3, was released for use in 2021. Now about $150 million worth of the bills are out of circulation. People have kept the bills instead of using them, mostly because they like the axolotl design. Some of the first bills that were printed are being sold for 100 times their value.

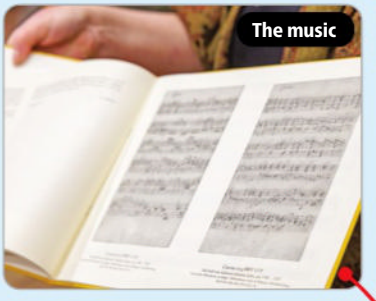
Palestinian players

Bilbao, Spain
Historic soccer match is played

On November 15, the national soccer team of Palestine played a team from the Basque Country (a region of northern Spain and southwestern France) in a friendly competition. Watched by more than 50,000 fans, it was Palestine's first match in Europe. Proceeds from the event went to Doctors Without Borders, which delivers aid in Palestine. Basque Country won, 3–0.

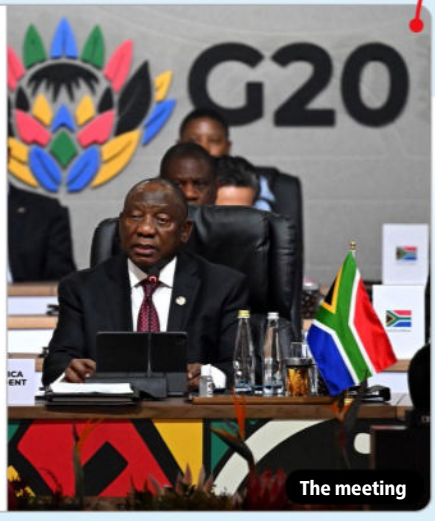
Leipzig, Germany
Lost Bach pieces performed

Two long-lost works of organ music by famous composer Johann Sebastian Bach have been played for the first time in 320 years. Bach wrote them when he was an organ teacher. They were discovered about 30 years ago, and experts have now proven their origin. They were performed at St. Thomas Church, where Bach is buried.


The music

Johannesburg, South Africa
International summit held

The Group of 20 (G20) summit was held in Africa for the first time ever on November 22 and 23. At the annual meeting of major nations, leaders promised to cooperate on shared goals, including helping poorer countries and addressing climate change, and to work toward peace in places with ongoing conflicts, such as Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine. The US did not attend but is set to host the next summit in 2026.



The meeting

GETTY IMAGES (5); AFP PHOTO / JENS SCHLUETER; BACH ARCHIVE; ALAMY (2); REUTERS; SHUTTERSTOCK

Around the world

An exhibit

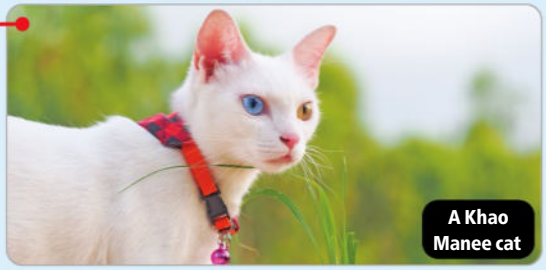
Zagreb, Croatia
Gaming museum opens

A museum dedicated to gaming has opened in Croatia's capital. Created by game designer Damir Šlogar, the Video Games History Museum features more than 3,000 artifacts and playable games spanning about 50 years of history. It includes the first arcade machine from 1971 and consoles such as Commodore 64 and PlayStation.

The final

Japan
Ukrainian wins sumo tournament

Danylo Yavhusishyn has become the first Ukrainian to win a sumo wrestling tournament in Japan. Yavhusishyn arrived in Japan three years ago after fleeing the war in Ukraine. The wrestler, who competes under the name Aonishiki Arata, beat grand champion Hoshoryu Tomokatsu from Mongolia to win the Kyushu tournament on November 23. After his win, Yavhusishyn told reporters that this was "just the beginning."


A Khao Manee cat

Thailand
Cat breeds protected

On November 18, Thailand's government announced that five breeds of domestic cats are now recognized as national symbols of the country. This means that these rare breeds will be protected, and the new status could also boost their popularity. The breeds include the Suphalak, Korat, Konja, Wichien Maat (also known as the Siamese cat), and Khao Manee (also known as the white jewel cat).

Dhaka, Bangladesh
Earthquake hits

A 5.5 magnitude earthquake struck near Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital city, on November 21. The quake caused buildings to shake and collapse, resulting in 10 deaths and more than 450 people injured. Tremors could be felt as far away as neighboring India. Fire and rescue officials worked to clear debris after the quake, while authorities assessed the damage and set up emergency phone numbers that people could call to request help.

Firefighters responding

A government building

Samoa
Newspaper banned from briefings

Samoan prime minister La'aulialemalietoa Leuatea Polataivao Fosi Schmidt has stopped staff from the country's only daily newspaper from attending press conferences at his offices. The government shares its news and updates with journalists at these meetings. The leader says that the *Samoa Observer*'s reporting is not accurate, but the paper rejects these claims.

Are driverless taxis a good idea?

Some say they're the future of travel, but others think we should hit the brakes.

What you need to know

- **Driverless vehicles use technology to understand their surroundings and drive themselves. They don't need a person to control them, and there is no one at the steering wheel.**
- **In 2018, the first "robotaxis" in the US, made by Waymo, hit the road in Phoenix, Arizona.**
- **Waymo has since launched the cars in other cities and has plans for further expansion in the US and the UK.**
- **China, the United Arab Emirates, and other countries already use robotaxis.**

A Waymo taxi

Would you ride in a taxi with no one in the driver's seat? Self-driving cars use cameras, sensors, and computers to see the road, stop at red lights, and avoid pedestrians and other vehicles. They use artificial intelligence (AI, when computers learn like humans do) to determine the quickest and safest route. Despite these high-tech tools, not everyone wants to try them. In a recent poll, 74% of Americans said they don't trust driverless cars. The companies that make the cars insist they're safe, and some studies show that cars controlled by computers can be safer than those with human drivers. What do you think? Are driverless taxis a good idea?

Yes—the future is here

Driving long distances can be hard on people because they get tired and need to take breaks, which makes the trip longer. Conditions like rain or snow can make it stressful to be behind the wheel. But driverless taxis never get tired or anxious and are programmed to handle all kinds of weather. Road trips with a robotaxi are also more fun because passengers can sing, laugh, and play games as loudly as they want. Computers don't get distracted or annoyed—they just focus on the road. And robotaxis are great for the automotive and tech industries and will create thousands of jobs. That helps people and the economy.

No—humans matter more

Instead of filling the roads with fleets of robotaxis, we should invest in eco-friendly transportation options, like buses and trains, and safer bike lanes. Computer-operated cars might be efficient for getting around, but we should think about humans too. If robotaxis take over, an entire industry of taxi drivers will lose their livelihoods. And there are passengers who like talking to their drivers, especially if they're visiting a new city. Besides, computers aren't perfect. Driverless cars have already crashed into things, and one passenger even got trapped inside a robotaxi as it drove in circles around a parking lot. That's scary!

YES Three reasons driverless taxis are a good idea

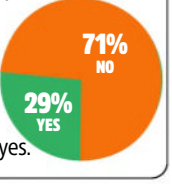
1. **Computers don't get tired or stressed, so they don't need to stop for rest breaks and can handle bad weather.**
2. **Passengers can be as noisy as they want. Robotaxis don't get distracted or annoyed.**
3. **Self-driving vehicles would be beneficial for the economy and for the people who could get jobs in the industry.**

NO Three reasons driverless taxis are not a good idea

1. **Instead of clogging up the roads with more cars, we should invest in eco-friendly transportation options.**
2. **Replacing humans with computers would put cab drivers out of a job.**
3. **Even robotaxis can mess up and get in accidents, and there's no way for a passenger to stop them.**

LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked you if we should stop using wrapping paper. Most of you want to stick with tradition for gift giving: 71% said no, and 29% said yes.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think driverless taxis are a good idea or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Breaking ice barriers

Hockey champion Hilary Knight will lead her sport at the 2026 Olympics.

Hilary Knight is the captain of the US Women's National Ice Hockey Team and an Olympic gold medalist. Now the star forward is heading into her fifth and final Winter Olympics in February at the 2026 Milan-Cortina Games in Italy.

Knight first put on skates at age 2 and started playing hockey at age 5. "I feel like I came into this world as an athlete," she told *The Week Junior*. She broke barriers early, playing on boys' teams because leagues for girls were rare.

The athlete in uniform

At the University of Wisconsin, Knight led the Badgers to national championships in 2009 and 2011. She won an Olympic gold medal in 2018 and took silver in 2010 and 2014. She also set records for goals, assists, and points at the International Ice Hockey Federation's Women's World Championships.

In 2023, Knight joined the newly launched PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League) to play for the team that became the Boston Fleet. She now plays for the Seattle Torrent. Off the ice, Knight advocated for fair pay for the women's national team. "We can amplify our voices and create greater visibility for the sport," she said.

One of Knight's sponsors for the upcoming Olympics is Polo Ralph Lauren, which has outfitted Team USA at 10 consecutive Games. She said she's excited for the US athletes to walk out in their coordinated looks on day one.

When asked for her words of wisdom, Knight offered this advice for young athletes: "Success doesn't happen overnight," she said. "If you have a dream, map out a way to achieve it."

Hilary Knight

STRONG START
Women's ice hockey made its Olympic debut at the Nagano 1998 Winter Games in Japan, where the US won the first gold medal.

Prize for innovation

Kenyan entrepreneur Elly Savatia has won the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, a top award from the UK's Royal Academy. Savatia created Terp 360, an app that translates speech and text into Kenyan Sign Language in real time. It enables people with hearing impairments to communicate without interpreters, improving their access to education, jobs, and health care. The app captures words in English and Swahili and is on track to expand to more global sign languages. Savatia received $67,000 with the prize.

Elly Savatia

R.L. Stine

Author is celebrated

R.L. Stine, author of the famous long-running *Goosebumps* series, was recently honored by his hometown of Columbus, Ohio, with the renaming of a street to "R.L. Stine Way." Stine, who began writing as a child after discovering a typewriter in his aunt's attic, also created the *Fear Street* books. Since the 1980s, he has sold more than 400 million books that have also inspired many TV and film adaptations. Stine, who visited Columbus for the street unveiling and a special fan event at the city's main library, called the honor "thrilling and gratifying."

OVERHEARD

"Through understanding the other, maybe you can understand yourself better, and you can learn how to love better."

Spanish pop star Rosalía on embracing both the Spanish and English languages in her lyrics

GETTY IMAGES (4); ROYAL ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING

WILD WARNING
Some frogs have brightly colored skin to signal to potential predators that they are toxic.

A male Asian common toad during breeding season

More color changers

Chameleons (below) change color to communicate or attract mates. Goldenrod crab spiders turn yellow or white to hide among flowers. Many octopuses can also change color to blend into their environment. Arctic foxes and stoats transform from brown to white as summer turns to winter.

The secret of color-changing toads

Male Asian common toads are known for changing the color of their skin from brown to bright yellow for about two days every year. A new study has shown that this glow-up plays a key role in helping the toads find mates.

Asian common toads live in India and southeast Asia. When the first monsoons (heavy rains) occur in June, the toads engage in a two-day mass breeding event. Their eggs then have plenty of time to hatch, and the tadpoles can develop into frogs before the climate dries out in winter.

The toads are usually brown.

With so many toads looking for mates during such a brief breeding period, male toads may get confused and accidentally attempt to mate with other males, different toad species, or even inanimate objects. Since males change to yellow while females stay brown, researchers believe the color shift helps males avoid each other during breeding time.

Previous research has revealed that male Asian common toads have special cells called chromatophores below their skin, which produce colors with different pigments (substances that give color to animals or plants). When stress hormones are released in the toads' bodies, the cells rearrange themselves. This starts the process of turning yellow, which takes the toads about 10 minutes.

In the new study, researchers from the Schönbrunn Zoo in Vienna used special instruments to scan the skin color of different toads. They used a computer model to confirm that the toads could distinguish between yellow and brown skin. Then the team 3D-printed model toads and placed them among a group of breeding toads.

The experiment showed that males often tried to mate with fake brown toads but mostly ignored the fake yellow ones. This was true even when the researchers changed other aspects of the models' appearance, such as their size. The findings suggest that male toads turn yellow as a sign to other males to stay away. "Identifying the correct mating partner can be difficult in these dense and stressful conditions," lead author Susanne Stückler told *National Geographic*. "Coloration appears to be one evolutionary solution to this problem."

PLACE OF THE WEEK

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge, Delaware

Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest protected salt marshes in the country. A salt marsh is a wetland that contains saltwater. The refuge, established in 1937, was designed to be a safe space and breeding ground for birds that migrate between Canada and Mexico along a north-south route known as the Atlantic Flyway. American black ducks, green-winged teal, and great blue herons are some of the water birds that live in the refuge. They are most likely to be seen in November and December on their way south to warmer destinations.

An American black duck

DID YOU KNOW?
The word "vaquita" means "little cow" in Spanish.

A vaquita

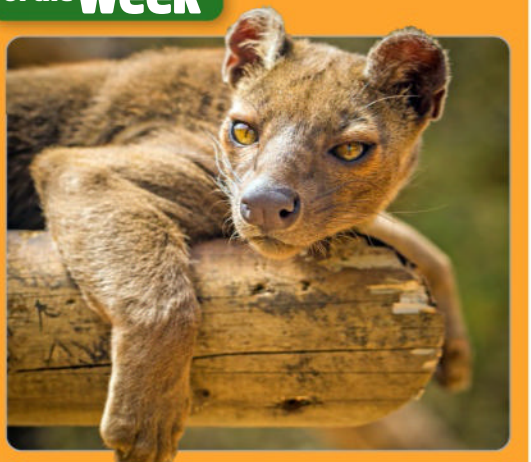
Hopeful sign for vaquitas

Researchers have spotted at least one new vaquita calf in Mexico's Gulf of California, reviving hope for Earth's most endangered marine mammal. Vaquitas are on the brink of extinction, with fewer than a dozen left.

Vaquitas are small, shy members of the porpoise family. They were discovered in 1958 and are found only in the northern part of the Gulf of California. Since the 1990s, their numbers have dropped by about 98%, mainly because they kept getting trapped in fishing nets. In 2019, fishing in the area was banned to protect the vaquitas.

Experts from the Mexican government and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society recently conducted their annual population survey using binoculars and underwater microphones. Vaquitas are famously hard to spot, but the team saw at least one female with a 1-year-old calf. Experts suspect the mother, nicknamed Frida, has another calf on the way. This brings the total estimated population to 7 to 10 vaquitas—an increase from 6 to 8 last year. "This is hope in action," Heidy Martinez of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society told *Scientific American*.

Animal of the week: Fossa



Three litters of fossa pups have been born in European zoos this year. Most recently, Chester Zoo in the UK welcomed four special arrivals: two females and two males. About 2,500 of the cat-like creatures are left in the wild.

- **LIFESPAN:** 15 years in the wild
- **HABITAT:** The forests of Madagascar
- **SIZE:** About 2 to 3 feet long
- **DIET:** Lemurs, wild pigs, mice, fish, and birds
- **FUN FACT:** Fossas prefer to be alone, but they communicate by marking things with their scent.

Good week / Bad week

Ochre sea stars

According to researchers, ochre sea stars have made a comeback on the Oregon coast after they were almost wiped out by deadly bacteria about 10 years ago. Scientists say the recovery shows that sea stars are surprisingly resilient.

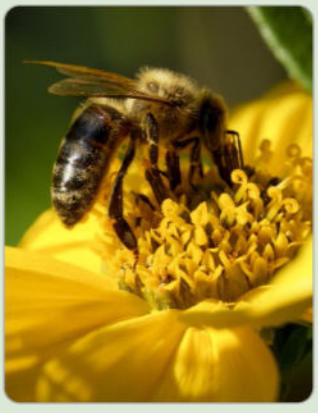
Christmas Island shrews

Australia's only native shrew has officially been declared extinct. The last sighting of a Christmas Island shrew, a small mouse-like mammal with a long snout, was in 1985. Since 1788, about 40 mammals have gone extinct in Australia.

Ask an expert: "How do bees make honey?"

Akshara, 8, California

Grace Carter
Research technician, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Bee Lab



Bees collect sweet nectar from flowers and store it in a special honey stomach, where it mixes with chemicals called enzymes. In the hive, the bee throws up the nectar, and her sisters help place it in honeycomb cells. They fan their wings to dry it out a bit, then seal each cell with beeswax.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Bee Lab at beelab.unl.edu.

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES (3); RE-WILD.ORG; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4); ALAMY

The inspiring story of

A teacher created Candy Land to brighten the days of children.

Candy Land is a game featuring a colorful fantasy world for young children. Find out about the invention of the world's sweetest board game.

Character movers

Playing Candy Land

The game comes with a board, four character movers, and either cards or a spinner. On each turn, players pick a card or spin the spinner to determine how many spaces they can go. Then they move their character on colorful squares around the board. The first player to reach Candy Castle at the end wins. To play, children only need to be able to recognize colors—they don't need to know how to read. This makes Candy Land a popular first game for kids as young as age 3.

The original board

How it began

In 1948, Eleanor Abbott, a retired teacher, was diagnosed with polio (a disease that affects the central nervous system). While recovering in a San Diego, California, hospital, she met children who also had polio. Wanting to help entertain them, she created a board game in which players moved wooden figures on a path through a candy landscape to get "home." Children loved it. Abbott pitched the game to toy maker Milton Bradley, which released it in 1949. In early versions of Candy Land, a boy on the game board was illustrated in a leg brace, like those worn by many children with polio (see image above). The popularity of the game soared, and Abbott donated money she earned from sales to children's charities.

FAMOUS GAME

Candy Land was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in Rochester, New York, in 2005.

HASBRO; ALAMY; COURTESY OF THE STRONG MUSEUM, ROCHESTER, NEW YORK; SHUTTERSTOCK; GIVE KIDS THE WORLD VILLAGE

the classic game

WOW! More than 75 million copies of Candy Land have been sold since its introduction, and about 1 million copies are sold every year.

A version of the game from 2004

Princess Lolly

A sweet success

Candy Land quickly became Milton Bradley's highest-selling board game. When Hasbro bought the company in 1984, it released a new edition of Candy Land the same year. In this version, official characters were introduced. They included Gloppy, Gramma Nutt, Jolly, King Kandy, Lord Licorice, Mr. Mint, Princess Lolly, and Queen Frostine. A computer version of the game was released in 1996, followed by a "chocolate edition" with edible pieces in 2014. Since Candy Land was invented, more than 12 versions of the board game have been created, many featuring new locations and characters.

Lasting legacy

Give Kids the World Village edition

Many images in popular culture have been derived from Candy Land. For example, American artist Will Cotton has painted landscapes inspired by Candy Land. His 1999 work *Molasses Swamp II* hangs at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC. A 2020 cooking show on the Food Network featured teams competing in Candy Land–themed challenges. The most recent version of the board game came out in 2025, with updates including a pouch of "candy tokens" and new character movers. Candy Land is now beloved across several generations. It also continues to brighten the lives of children in need. Every year Hasbro donates 10,000 special editions of the game to Give Kids the World Village, a resort in Florida where children with serious illnesses and their families are treated to free vacations.

FAST FACT
Nine foods are the source of most allergic reactions: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat, soy, and sesame.

Because peanuts grow underground, rather than on trees, they are considered a legume, not a nut.

Major breakthrough in food allergies

Children are less likely to develop food allergies if they are introduced to peanut products as infants, a new study found. Experts said the research presents a promising potential solution for dangerous allergies to common foods.

About 33 million people in the US have food allergies, including about 5.6 million children. Peanuts are one of the most allergenic foods. About 1% to 2% of people in the US are allergic to them, and only about 20% of people who have a peanut allergy as children outgrow it later in life. Allergic reactions can range from mild symptoms to severe anaphylaxis (see box at right). In 2023, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the prevalence of food allergies had increased by 50% since the 1990s.

Peanuts can cause a range of reactions.

For many years, as the number of people with food allergies increased, doctors encouraged parents to avoid exposing their babies to common allergens, including peanuts. But in a 2015 study, researchers found that feeding peanut products to infants could reduce their odds of developing an allergy by more than 80%. Two years later, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases issued national guidelines officially recommending that parents try exposing babies to peanuts.

According to the new study, food allergy rates in children under age 3 dropped by 36% between 2017 and 2020. Peanut allergies decreased by 43%, and eggs replaced peanuts as the top food allergen in young children. The study, which followed 125,000 children, indicated that about 57,000 fewer children had food allergies as a result of the new approach.

Scientists aren't sure what causes food allergies, but several other studies in the past 10 years have shown that exposing infants to allergenic foods, as their immune systems are developing, helps the body recognize them as safe. The latest national guidelines, released in 2021, recommend exposing infants ages 4 to 6 months to common food allergens. Giving a baby a pea-size quantity of peanut butter or a small bite of scrambled eggs can help familiarize the immune system with the foods.

Researchers in the new study did not examine what infants ate, so the study does not prove that the early-introduction approach to allergens caused the drop in the number of food allergies. But scientists said the findings are encouraging.

How food allergies work

Many foods cause allergies.

Allergic reactions are triggered by your immune system trying to protect you from something it mistakenly identifies as harmful, like a food. Your body attacks the allergen with histamines, which are chemicals your immune system makes for this purpose.

The histamines cause reactions such as tearing up, sneezing, hives, itching, swelling, an upset stomach, and asthma. The most severe reaction is anaphylaxis, which can make it difficult to breathe and be life-threatening if not treated quickly. A device called an EpiPen delivers medicine that can stop anaphylaxis.

Blood or skin tests can be used to determine whether someone is allergic to a food. For skin tests, a small amount of the suspected allergen is placed on the skin to see how the patient reacts.

"Dinosaur highway" is found in the UK

Researchers have discovered a "dinosaur highway" in a quarry in England. The first dinosaur footprints in that area were found in 2024, but 200 more were uncovered this year across four trackways (paths formed by footprints). They were made about 166 million years ago, during the Jurassic Period, when the area was wet and muddy.

An artist's rendering of the dinosaur trackways

A researcher standing next to the dino prints

BIG FEET
The largest dinosaur footprint ever found was more than 5.5 feet long and was made by a sauropod.

The site is the largest collection of dinosaur trackways in the UK. The longest spans more than 720 feet, about the length of two football fields, and some of the footprints in it are 3 feet long—more than twice as big as an elephant's. Massive plant eaters called sauropods made three of the trackways, and the fourth was made by a Megalosaurus, a large, meat-eating dino that was as tall as a two-story house.

The dinosaurs stepped in the mud, leaving footprints that got covered by sand and soil. Over millions of years, the tracks became fossilized. Experts used explosives to blast apart the hard layers, then scraped away the last layer to reveal the footprints.

They took more than 20,000 photographs using drones, made 3D molds of some footprints, and built 3D models of the site. Researchers said the trackways and the data gathered from them can offer insight into the dinosaurs' size and how they moved around in their natural environment, including how fast they walked and how they interacted. Experts also said it is likely that there are more footprints to be found at the quarry.

Activities like painting can help your brain.

Being creative can keep people young

Creative activities can slow brain aging, a new study shows. An international team of researchers studied 1,400 participants from 13 countries, including dancers, artists, musicians, and video gamers. They ranged from beginners to experts.

Researchers scanned their brains and had them undergo cognitive (related to thinking or reasoning) testing. The results showed that people who routinely performed creative activities had "younger" brains. This was especially true for tango dancers, whose brain age was about seven years younger than others their age. Even people who only occasionally spent time on creative pursuits saw some benefits.

The scientists said doctors could prescribe creativity as a low-cost way to protect brain health. "Our societies need to reimagine healthy aging through both medical and non-medical domains, such as creativity, arts, and play," said Agustin Ibanez, one of the authors of the study.

AMAZING INVENTION

A robot that helps at home

A new humanoid robot will soon be ready to help people with daily household tasks. NEO, made by US company 1X, can walk up and down stairs, do laundry, clean the house, put away groceries, and learn to do new tasks based on a family's needs.

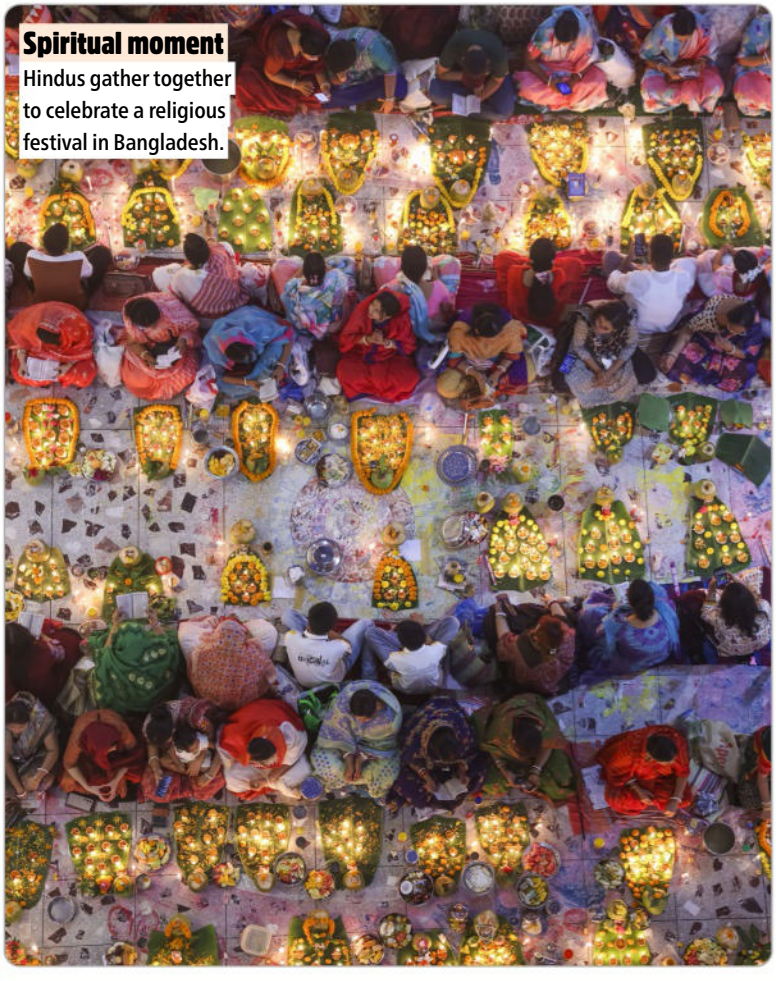
Standing 5.5 feet tall and weighing 66 pounds, NEO has a cushioned body and flexible joints for gentle movement. It follows voice commands or does tasks scheduled in an app. The robot can also fetch items, answer questions, search the internet, and tell jokes.

NEO the robot

MARK WITTON/ UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM; RICHARD BUTLER; GETTY IMAGES; 1X; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (3)

Photos of the week

Spot on
A full Moon rises over an ancient temple in Turkey.



Spiritual moment
Hindus gather together to celebrate a religious festival in Bangladesh.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Time zone
In Germany, an art installation in a garden features 24 clocks.

Soft landing
A bird feather rests in a water droplet on a leaf in India.

Freeze frame
This aerial image of blue limestone pools was taken in China.

Sky light
Garrett, 11, of Colorado took this photo of a sunset over a lake in Vermont.

READER PHOTO

GROWING LEAGUE
A team based in Atlanta, Georgia, will begin playing in the NWSL in 2028.

Gotham FC celebrating

Player update

Trinity Rodman (above), one of the best soccer players from the US, may be leaving the NWSL. Her Washington Spirit contract is expiring, and there are reports that clubs from England and a new US league are trying to sign her. The NWSL has said it will try to keep her.

Gotham wins NWSL championship

On November 22, the 2025 NWSL (National Women's Soccer League) championship match took place in San Jose, California. Gotham FC, the lowest-seeded (ranked) team in the playoffs, capped off a stunning postseason run by beating the number two seed, the Washington Spirit, by a score of 1–0 to win their second title in three years.

Gotham's regular-season record was 9–9–8. In the first round of the playoffs, they upset the top-seeded Kansas City Current. In the semifinals, they beat the fourth-seeded Orlando Pride, the 2024 champions.

Rose Lavelle

The Spirit, who lost to the Pride in last season's final, entered this year's playoffs as the second seed. They defeated the seventh-seeded Racing Louisville FC and the third-seeded Portland Thorns before facing Gotham. This year's final was a rematch of a 2024 semifinal game, where the Spirit beat Gotham in a penalty shootout.

The match in San Jose was a tense, defensive battle, and Gotham midfielder Jaedyn Shaw had the only shot on goal of the first half. Her attempt was saved, while several other shot attempts were blocked. The defensive dominance on both sides continued deep into the second half.

The big moment of the match came in the 80th minute, when Gotham defender Bruninha (she uses one name) dribbled deep into opposing territory before finding teammate Rose Lavelle at the top of the penalty box. Lavelle delivered a shot into the bottom left corner and broke the 0–0 tie. Gotham's defense sealed the victory by staving off the Spirit's late efforts to even the score. The Spirit didn't have any shots on goal in the entire match.

Lavelle was named the final's Most Valuable Player (MVP). She and her team will now focus on the FIFA Women's Champions Cup, an international competition. They earned a spot in it earlier this year by winning the Concacaf W Champions Cup, a competition for clubs in North America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

Three days before the final, the NWSL announced its regular-season awards. Among the winners were Current star Temwa Chawinga, who became the league's first back-to-back MVP.

THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

In a game on November 23, the Dallas Cowboys came back from a 21-point deficit to beat the defending Super Bowl champions, the Philadelphia Eagles, 24–21. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott threw for two touchdowns and ran for one. In a 10-point comeback win the same day, the New England Patriots beat the Cincinnati Bengals, 26–20. The win brought the Patriots' record to 10–2, the best in the NFL.

Kenneth Murray, Jr. of the Dallas Cowboys

CLUB SOCCER

English Premier League clubs Arsenal FC and Tottenham Hotspur faced off on November 23 in a famous rivals match known as the North London derby. Arsenal won, 4–1.

ALPINE SKIING

US skier Mikaela Shiffrin won the women's slalom race at an alpine skiing World Cup event on November 23. It was her second World Cup win in seven days. The latest victory was her 103rd career World Cup win, a record in skiing.

TOP TALENT
In the PWHL, 94 players are from Canada, 88 are from the US, and 25 are from other countries.

The Vancouver Goldeneyes vs. the Seattle Torrent on November 21

New teams help start PWHL action

The third season of the PWHL (Professional Women's Hockey League) began on November 21. The league has expanded to eight teams with the addition of the new Vancouver Goldeneyes and the Seattle Torrent. The Minnesota Frost are the PWHL's two-time defending Walter Cup champions.

Each team will play 30 regular-season games between now and the end of April. To allow more people across North America to see PWHL games in person, the league is bringing back its Takeover Tour. As part of that, 16 games will be played in neutral-site arenas in 11 different cities.

Earlier this year, to help ensure that the new teams would be competitive, the Goldeneyes and the Torrent drafted players from the original six teams to join their rosters. One of the top Torrent players is former New York Sirens star Alex Carpenter, a 2024 MVP finalist, while the Goldeneye's lineup includes three top defenders who used to play for the Frost.

The new teams competed against each other in one of the two games on opening night. The Goldeneyes earned their first win with a 4–3 victory over the Torrent in overtime. Goldeneyes forward Abby Boreen scored the game-winning goal less than two minutes into the extra period. Earlier that night, the Frost raised their championship banner before losing to the Toronto Sceptres, 2–1.

On November 22, the New York Sirens beat the Ottawa Charge, 4–0. Forward Taylor Girard scored three of the goals. The next day, the Boston Fleet shut out the Montreal Victoire, 2–0. Boston goalie Aerin Frankel made 25 saves in the win.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Lennon Rodgers**

Team: **Blessed Sacrament Friars (flag football)**

"Coach Lennon is great because he is always looking for ways to improve us on and off the field. He also likes to have fun with us when practicing or playing, and he is always very supportive, win or lose. He is great at helping us improve in the areas where we need the most work. He always has a positive attitude while running drills and is a great leader. He is nice to the parents and rewards us for doing great things on and off the field." Silas, 13, Wisconsin

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

These US athletes are hoping to qualify for the upcoming Winter Olympics or Paralympics in Italy. Here are some quotes they shared with The Week Junior *about their lives.*

Gus Schumacher AGE: 25
SPORT: CROSS COUNTRY SKIING

"When I was about 10, I'd go to ski practice and commentate like I was racing my friend at the Olympics. I really wanted to be a good athlete, but it took until I was 15 or 16 to feel like it was going to be attainable."

Dani Aravich AGE: 29
SPORT: PARA NORDIC SKIING

"I didn't know until I was about 23 years old that I'd be able to be a Paralympian. I grew up with a disability, so it's a real shame I didn't get to know more about it and have that opportunity earlier. I hope that the more we tell people about the Paralympics, the more kids with disabilities can realize there's a path for them in sports."

Colby Stevenson AGE: 28
SPORT: FREESKI

"I did some ski racing when I was a kid. I found jumps on the side of the run and fell in love with getting in the air. After that, I wanted to learn more tricks and go bigger. It's totally fun and creative."

Madison Chock AGE: 33
SPORT: ICE DANCE

"US figure skater Michelle Kwan was really inspiring to me. As a young Asian skater, it was really beautiful to see someone who looked like me accomplishing her goals and performing on the biggest stage."

Nick Baumgartner AGE: 43
SPORT: SNOWBOARD CROSS

"Being in a sport has taught me how to fight through adversity, how to be a gracious winner, and also how to lose, get knocked down, and pick yourself back up."

GETTY IMAGES (6); ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (4)

FUN VISIT
The American Museum of Natural History hosts "A Night at the Museum" sleepovers for kids.

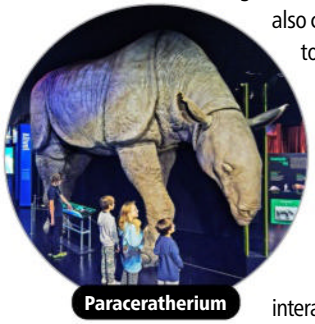
A mosasaur in *Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs*

A look at the history of Earth

In New York City, a new exhibition explores dinosaur life, the asteroid that reshaped it, and the aftermath.

The American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City has a new exhibition that explores one of the most dramatic moments in Earth's history: a giant asteroid crashing into the planet 66 million years ago. *Impact: The End of the Age of Dinosaurs* uses life-size models, fossils, and the latest scientific research to explain how so much of life on Earth was destroyed—and how it eventually recovered.

During the Cretaceous Period (145 to 66 million years ago), the Earth was filled with diverse species of plants and animals on land and in the oceans. That changed after the asteroid, which is thought to have been six to 10 miles wide, struck an area that is now part of Mexico. It caused tsunamis, massive wildfires, and months of darkness, leading to steep temperature drops. As a result, most dinosaurs and many other species went extinct.



Paraceratherium

The exhibition is divided into areas that focus on life on Earth before the collision, what happened at the moment of impact, and the short-term and long-term consequences. "It wasn't just a catastrophic, destructive thing that happened. It shaped the world we live in today," Roger Benson, the lead curator (person who selects and organizes artifacts), told *The Week Junior*.

Highlights of the exhibition include several large, detailed models of dinosaurs. There is an 18-foot Triceratops, a 27-foot mosasaur lunging at a 30-foot plesiosaur, and a towering 15-foot ancient mammal Paraceratherium, considered the largest land mammal that ever lived. Visitors also can touch a replica of a mosasaur tooth and explore dioramas of prehistoric ecosystems. Benson said it was a world filled with "rich, diverse ecosystems that include the roots of things like birds, mammals, lizards, and crocodilians."

The exhibition also includes fun interactive elements. One of them is a personality quiz that matches each visitor with a Cretaceous-era animal species. In another area, visitors can play a video game that involves defending Earth from asteroids.

Although many people think the story of the asteroid hitting Earth is about devastation, the point of the exhibition is to help people see that it was so much more. "It's also a story about the resilience of life and of our planet," said Sean M. Decatur, president of AMNH.

Making the dinosaur models

To create an exhibition's lifelike dinosaurs, model makers rely on a mix of fossil evidence and scientific inference. They examine well-preserved skeletons and skin impressions that show the texture of the creature's hide. They also study trackways (fossilized footprints) to understand how a dinosaur stood and moved. That information helps them decide how to shape a model's feet and posture.

Colors rarely fossilize, so no one knows the true color of dinosaur skin. Instead, model makers get ideas from modern reptiles and birds, which tend to have more colorful bodies than mammals do, Benson said. For that reason, the exhibit's model of the Triceratops, shown above being assembled, was later given orange markings for its finished look.

NATURE LOVER
The Visioneers host Zay Harding grew up in Hawaii and enjoyed exploring the outdoors.

The Visioneers with Zay Harding

TV series highlights eco-heroes

The second season of an award-winning TV series about the creative work scientists, engineers, and others are doing to help protect the Earth recently began airing. *The Visioneers with Zay Harding* takes viewers around the US and the world to learn about interesting innovations and meaningful projects, including many led by kids. The show airs weekend mornings on CBS (check local listings) and can also be found on CBS.com and Pluto TV.

The idea for the series came from Harding himself. He used to work on the PBS series *Globe Trekker*, and after seeing the effects of climate change during his travels, he wanted to raise awareness about it. "Earth is providing for us everything we need, and we're not taking care of her as well as we could be," he told *The Week Junior*. Instead of focusing on what people are doing wrong, he said, "*The Visioneers* focuses on what people are doing to bring positive solutions."

Zay Harding

When it comes to innovations, Harding said, "some of the coolest stuff is coming from kids." For example, one teen highlighted in the series created a program to redistribute used school uniforms so they don't end up in landfills, and another devised a way to remove microplastics from water. A few of the adult-led innovations featured in season two include a boat that runs on electricity instead of gasoline, bags made with upcycled materials, and a floating eco park.

The show is meant to be inspiring to young viewers. "What we hope kids take away is that anybody can do anything," Harding said. "You don't have to be a scientist. If you're interested in making a difference, look at how these other kids have done it. Just start exploring."

READER RECOMMENDS

Wizards of Waverly Place *(Disney+ or rent on other platforms)*
"This show is good for fans of *Harry Potter* and comedy. It inspired the series *Wizards Beyond Waverly Place* and the TV movie *The Wizards Return: Alex vs. Alex*. It's about siblings Alex, Justin, and Max Russo, who are wizards in training. They go on adventures, fight the Angels of Darkness, and save the world more than once. Alex's mortal friend Harper helps them and keeps their powers a secret. Through a mix of magical mess-ups, teen romance, and amazing competition, the kids become wizards and also better people." Violet, 11, Louisiana

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST

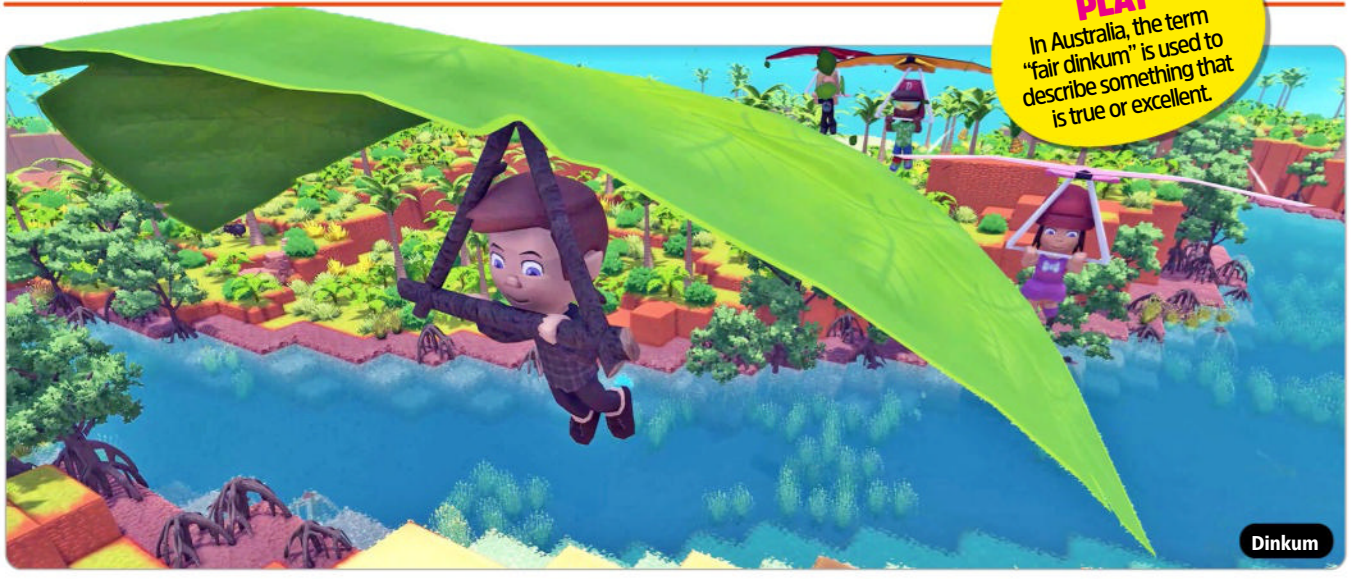
The First Snow of Fraggle Rock
(Apple TV+)
Fraggle Rock's cave creatures celebrate life and friendship with music. In a new holiday special, Gobo wants to write a seasonal song, but when a snowfall brings only one flake, he heads off to the human world for inspiration. Look out for singer and social media star Lele Pons.

Monsters Funday Football
(Disney+) (ESPN+) (NFL+) December 8 at 8 p.m. ET
Save the date for this live broadcast of an NFL game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the Los Angeles Chargers, which will turn the players into animated athletes and feature characters from the *Monsters, Inc.* franchise.

The Fantastic Four: First Steps
(Disney+)
Marvel Comics' first family is the Fantastic Four: Reed Richards, Sue Storm, Johnny Storm, and Ben Grimm. In this film, the heroes must protect humanity and one another from a cosmic threat brought on by the arrival of space god Galactus and his mysterious messenger, the Silver Surfer.

HEARST MEDIA PRODUCTION GROUP (2); DISNEY; APPLE TV+; ESPN; 20TH CENTURY STUDIOS/MARVEL STUDIOS; ON LEFT PAGE: ALVARO KEDING AND DANIEL KIM/AMNH

WORD PLAY
In Australia, the term "fair dinkum" is used to describe something that is true or excellent.


Dinkum

Build up an island world

Dinkum is an open-world survival life-simulation game. A Steam Early Access edition of the game launched in 2022, and the full release for the PC arrived this spring. It was also recently released for the Nintendo Switch.

The game, which is similar to Animal Crossing and Stardew Valley, is set on a barren island inspired by the wild Australian Outback. Before the action begins, you customize your character and name the island. At the start, your character leaves cold South City to accompany an old woman, Fletch, to visit the island.

When you arrive, you set out to explore the island's many climates and habitats, looking for a place to begin building. There are beaches, forests, deserts, and a deep mine. Animals you'll encounter include kangaroo-like jackaroos and pleeps, a cross between a sheep and a platypus. Every environment offers resources and supplies, which you use to build towns. It's a good idea to choose a place suitable for a farm, which will help you feed people who arrive.

Dinkum has bug collecting and hunting, and you'll have to survive encounters with sharks, crocodiles, and other animals. That makes Dinkum more exciting than Animal Crossing, but it's not too scary.

Players are responsible for every aspect of growing the town and constructing its buildings. You have to collect the resources, create tools, and unlock building plans. Friendly characters who live in the town all have special skills. They can help with the work and offer new opportunities to grow the town. You can also get into the action with up to four real-life players at the same time.

PODCAST OF THE WEEK

PATRICK PICKLEBOTTOM EVERYDAY MYSTERIES

Major podcast platforms

This show, which is based on books of the same name, follows 11-year-old Patrick Picklebottom as he solves mysteries with his friend Claire. Their cases include looking for a fisherman's missing rowboat and uncovering riddles at a garage sale.

GAME OF THE WEEK

FROG HOTEL

Apple App Store, Google Play

In this simulation game, you build and manage a hotel run by clumsy but kind frogs. The goal is to keep all the guests happy by welcoming them, decorating the rooms, and upgrading hotel facilities. Your hotel can continue to grow when you're offline if you leave it in idle mode.

WEBSITE OF THE WEEK

WORLD'S BIGGEST PAC-MAN

worldsbiggestpacman.com

A free version of the classic Pac-Man arcade game is available on this site. It features user-created, interconnected mazes that you play in by using your keyboard's arrow keys. You can track your stats, compete with others, climb global leaderboards, and make your own mazes.

KRAFTON (2); WOLF ENTERTAINMENT/PINNA; 4TH MAY GAMES; BANDAI NAMCO

BOOK CLUB PICK FOR DECEMBER

Busted

By Dan Gemeinhart

(Henry Holt and Co.)

Oscar is a 12-year-old who has been raised by his grandfather since he was a baby. They live in a retirement home where they are very happy. But when the owner of the retirement home dies, the owner's son raises the rent and Oscar and his grandfather can't afford the new price. Meanwhile, Jimmy, one of the home's new residents, wants to escape. Jimmy makes Oscar an offer: If Oscar helps him sneak out for a few hours to take care of some unfinished business, he'll pay Oscar enough money so he and his grandfather can afford the new rent. Oscar, who is usually a rule follower, agrees to the deal and creates a distraction that allows Jimmy to sneak out. Once Jimmy is out, he realizes he can't reach his car by himself, so Oscar helps him. Natasha, whose dad now runs the retirement home, joins them. The unlikely trio makes many stops, running into mobsters and other bad guys, while the chapters count down the time left before the retirement home workers are scheduled to check in on Jimmy. It's a rollicking adventure by the author of *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*.

WIN A BOOK!

We're giving away one signed copy of *Busted*.

For a chance to win, send your name and address to *contests@theweekjunior.com* with Busted in the subject line. Enter by midnight on December 19. See theweekjunior.com/terms for complete rules.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

Busted is an adventure that's bursting with originality. It's about a boy who lives in a retirement home and takes a joyride with an elderly resident. Here are questions to get a conversation going with friends and family who have also read the book.

What do you think your favorite thing about living in a retirement home would be?

If you were in Oscar's shoes, would you have accepted Jimmy's offer? Explain your answer.

What is Jimmy's most redeeming quality?

How does the character of Natasha make the story more interesting?

Which part of the book made you laugh the most?

Which character would you most like to know in real life?

If this book were to have a sequel, what idea would you have for it?

JOIN *THE WEEK JUNIOR* BOOK CLUB

Find out more about *The Week Junior* Book Club and check out our previous book of the month selections at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.

Ask the Author

Busted is award-winning writer Dan Gemeinhart's 10th book, which he describes as his "funniest one yet!" He spoke to *The Week Junior* about the book and other projects.

What sparked the idea for *Busted*?

More than 10 years ago, I visited a retirement home and thought it was a special place. I wondered: What would it be like for a child to grow up here? How would that change them? What kind of problems would they have? I filed that idea away. During the pandemic, I started writing the story.

Describe your writing process.

I'm a make-it-up-as-I-go writer. I have an idea for how a book is going to start, and that's about it. I don't even make an outline. I rewrite the first several chapters five or six times to get to know my characters. I eventually get a rough draft done, and then I revise it about a dozen more times.

How did *Busted* change from the first draft to the final draft?

In my first draft, it took a lot longer to get to the scene where Oscar helps Jimmy escape. I had to cut a lot of chapters!

Did you always want to write?

I had three dreams as a kid. I wanted to be an author, a teacher, and a professional football player. I'm super lucky that two out of three came true. Before I was an author, I was a teacher and librarian for 14 years.

What did you love to read?

I read *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor in fifth grade, and it blew me away.

What's next?

I'm currently adapting *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise* into a graphic novel. After that, I'll be working on a picture book.

Favorite holiday tradition?

When I was growing up, we'd have cheese fondue for Christmas Eve dinner.

BOOK: COURTESY OF PUBLISHER; AUTHOR: COURTESY OF DAN GEMEINHART; GETTY IMAGES

DID YOU KNOW?
Americans gave nearly $593 million to charity in 2024, up more than 6% from the year before.

Help your neighbors

You can brighten spirits this time of year with simple yet meaningful actions.

The holiday season is an ideal time to spread joy among the people who live near you. Making a festive card for a neighbor, volunteering to help them with a chore, or simply spreading kindness can lift their spirits and make your own holiday season feel more meaningful too. Here are some simple and thoughtful ways to help your neighbors.

Start small

Little acts of kindness, especially during the holidays, can have a larger impact than you might expect. Gestures like taking the time to say hello to a neighbor, carrying grocery bags or packages for an older person, or stopping to talk with a younger neighbor who looks up to you can leave a positive impression on someone's day.

Bake a sweet surprise.

Share a homemade gift

Many people like to show their appreciation for their neighbors at the holidays by sharing a small gift. For example, with an adult's help, you can make cookies or muffins, put a few in a festive tin or a gift bag, and give them to your neighbor with a note like, "We hope these treats bring holiday smiles!" Another idea is to give them a mug with hot cocoa packets inside along with a note that says "Warm wishes!" You could also draw a picture for them or deliver a homemade holiday greeting card to them.

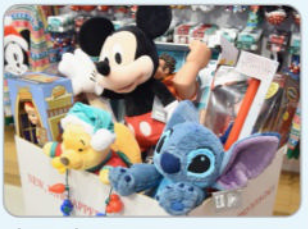
Offer to help

Your neighbors, especially an older person or a parent with a baby to take care of, might appreciate your offer to assist with chores. Stop by with an adult and ask if you can help shovel their walk, refill their bird feeder, or bring in their recycling bins. You could also make a gift envelope of homemade coupons they can redeem for tasks such as "water your plants" or "clear the snow off your car."

Check in

Many people have family to spend the holidays with, but some neighbors who live alone might be feeling a little lonely at this time of year. With a parent, stop by their home to offer season's greetings. While you're there, you can ask them if they need anything. Another idea to discuss with your family is inviting a few neighbors to a holiday "open house" where you can share treats, a warm drink, and conversation. For more ways you can help others during this holiday season, see the suggestions in the box at right.

3 worthy causes



These charities are among many that offer ways to give back.

Toys for Tots Run by the Marine Corps Reserve, this organization collects more than 24 million new toys and games each year for kids in need. Find where to drop off toys at toysfortots.org.

Meals on Wheels This organization delivers meals, including special options for the holidays, to people in need. See how you can take part at mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

One Simple Wish You can help make a wish come true, whether it's for a new winter coat or a special toy, for a child in foster care. Learn how at onesimplewish.org.

SPECIAL CELEBRATION
This year the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah will take place from December 14 to 22.

Make gift envelopes for Hanukkah

What you'll need

- 8 colorful envelopes (like small "coin" envelopes)
- Markers, washi tape, stickers, or rubber stamps and ink pads
- Small gifts like candy, chocolate coins, stickers, gift cards, mini toys, key chains, lip balm, or a thoughtful note or photo
- Optional: ribbon and small clothespins (for hanging)

Instructions

1. Write or stamp the envelopes with numbers 1 through 8 for the eight nights of Hanukkah.
2. Decorate the envelopes: Cut washi tape to make dreidels, menorahs, or other designs. For a dreidel, cut a piece 2 inches long, then cut one end into a triangle. Press it to the envelope and add a short, thin piece of tape at the top for the handle. For a menorah, place a wide tape strip in the center of an envelope. Add two strips for an upside-down T base. Use eight short pieces and one taller piece as candles. Snip nine diamond-shaped pieces of yellow tape for flames (or draw on with markers).
3. With a family member's help, fill the envelopes with small gifts, treats, or notes. Close the envelopes with a piece of washi tape.
4. Optional: Make a garland by hanging a ribbon across a wall, shelf, or doorway. Use clothespins to clip on the envelopes in order from 1 to 8.
5. Open an envelope on each night of Hanukkah, or give them to someone you care about.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK: WRAP PRESENTS IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

During the holiday season, most paper used to wrap presents gets thrown away. This can be harmful to the environment because the gift wrap and ribbons take up space in a landfill. There are ways you can wrap presents nicely while still being mindful of the environment, however. One option is to wrap items in brown kraft paper. This paper can be recycled or composted, which makes it a more environmentally friendly option. You can also tie up presents in ribbon made from recycled paper or natural fibers, like raffia twine. Another eco-friendly option is to reuse gift bags and boxes from one year to the next.

JODI LEVINE FOR SUPERMAKEIT; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Word search

Can you find all these words associated with chess? They are hidden horizontally, vertically, or diagonally and can be forward or backward. When you're done, read the remaining letters to get a bonus message.

ATTACK
BISHOP
BLACK
BOARD
CAPTURE
CASTLING
CHECKMATE
CLUB
DRAW
ENDGAME
GAMBIT
GRANDMASTER
KING
KNIGHT
LOSS
MOVES
OPENING
PAWN
PIECE
PLAY
QUEEN
ROOK
RULES
SQUARE
STALEMATE
TACTICS
TOURNAMENT
WHITE

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E	R	A	U	Q	S	S	E	P	T	O		
	B	T	M	E	T	S	E	L	U	R		
		E	P	B	L	N	E	V	L	B		
			K	N	I	G	H	T	O			
	A	O	Y	N	N	T	E	A	I	M	D	
	O	I	G	N	G	S	R	P	A	H	C	
R	E	T	S	A	M	D	N	A	R	G	W	E

FOUR IN A ROW

Place four of the letters below to complete the first pair of words, in the same order in both words. Use the remaining four letters to complete the second pair of words, in the same order in both words. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

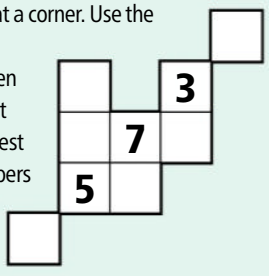
A C D E I L T U

_ _ N O S _ _ R
_ _ _ L O G _ E

E _ _ C _ R I _
_ _ _ T U _ E

Out of order

The numbers 1 to 9 can fit, one per square, so that no two consecutive numbers are in squares that touch in any way, even at a corner. Use the numbers already given to figure out where the rest of the numbers go.



FILL IN THE BLANKS

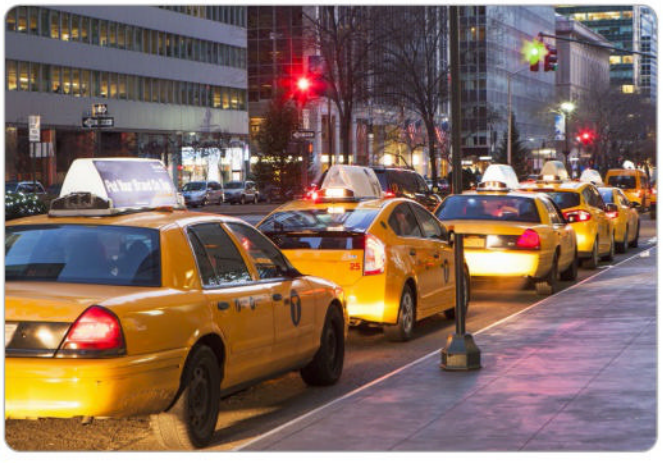
Fill in the blanks in each sentence with two words so the second word is the same as the first word with one letter added to the end, like FORGE and FORGET.

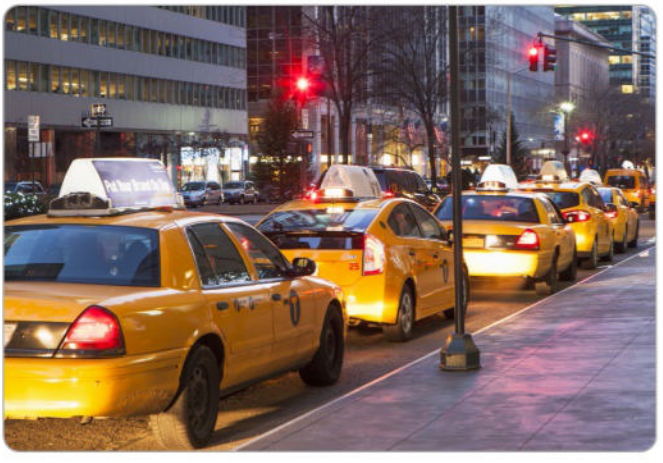
ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

1. The campers had so much trouble pitching their _ _ _ _ in the wind that they gave up after the _ _ _ _ _ try.
2. If my father finds something he likes at a tag sale, he will never _ _ _ _ _ from his first offer because he refuses to go over his _ _ _ _ _ _.
3. The fir tree is not losing any of its _ _ _ _ _ _ _ yet, so it is _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ to sweep up around it every morning.

Spot the difference

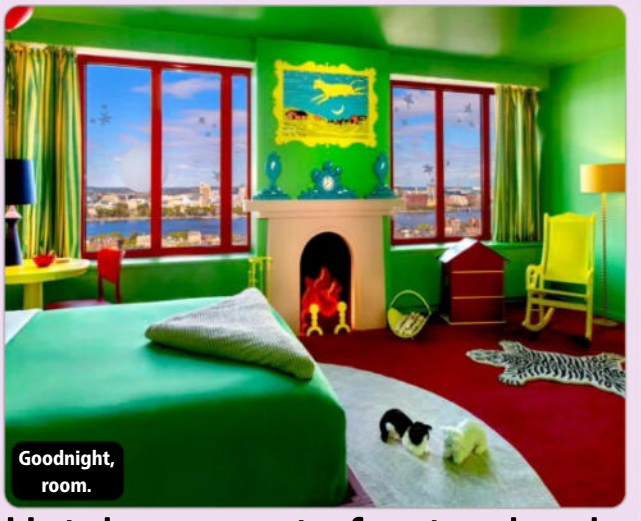
These two pictures of New York City taxis appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?





PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

Four in a row hint: The first letter of the last word is L.



Goodnight, room.

Hotel room out of a storybook

Fans of classic children's literature have a new place to rest their heads. A hotel in Massachusetts has turned one of its rooms into a *Goodnight Moon* suite, re-creating the setting of the book by Margaret Wise Brown. Guests can immerse themselves in the bedroom from the beloved story, with its green walls, tiger-shaped rug, red balloon, and ingredients for a "bowl of mush." But those hoping to say good night to the Moon through these windows had better hurry—the suite is available only until February.

Accomplishing a pipe dream

Bagpipers set a rockin' record

Hundreds of musicians in Australia have broken a world record for the largest bagpipe ensemble. At the Great Melbourne Bagpipe Bash, 374 pipers played the song "It's a Long Way to the Top" by the rock band AC/DC, beating a record set by 333 pipers in Bulgaria in 2012. The Australian Book of Records also gave Bruce Hocking, age 98, a title as the oldest participant. Piper Les Kenfield, who once played with AC/DC, said the record-breaking event was "probably the greatest thing I've ever done in my life."

She's roaring with delight to be back.

Police locate missing dinosaur

After a model dinosaur went missing from an exhibition in New Zealand, organizers appealed for help to get it back. They posted on social media, "HELP! Our baby dinosaur's mom has been stolen!" Luckily, the police quickly got to work to find it. They eventually tracked down the dino and transported it in a police car to be reunited with the rest of its model dinosaur family. Police officers wrote, "Jurassic justice has been served."

Real or fake?

Does this idea have legs?

Power lines to get a makeover

Pylons are large metal structures that hold up the cables carrying electricity from power stations to towns and cities. They are important but not very attractive—yet. In Austria, plans are being made to give pylons a nature-themed makeover. The Austrian Power Giants will be sculptures of different animals, including stags and storks, representing each of Austria's nine states. The idea came from designers who want to make power lines more interesting and beautiful. Is this story true, or is it a shocking lie?*

*Real! Two test models have been created to assess the safety and stability of animal-shaped pylons. Austrian Power Grid, which manages the country's electricity, hopes they will boost public opinion of the structures.

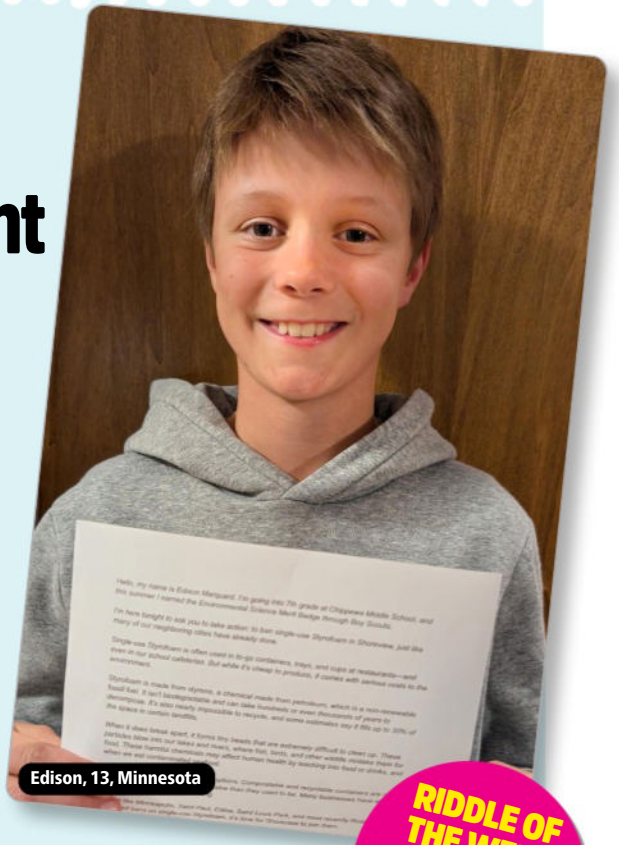
SHERATON BOSTON HOTEL; GETTY IMAGES; COVER IMAGES; AUSTRIAN POWER GIANTS; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2)

Editor's note

As I'm writing this letter to you, Thanksgiving is two days away. Amid the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, I'm feeling grateful for so many things: a wonderful family, cherished friends, good health, an amazing team I'm so lucky to work with at *The Week Junior*, and YOU—our bright, curious readers. After all, you are the reason we publish this magazine! You are also the reason we are hosting a special virtual event on Thursday, December 4. We are bringing our readers together with five incredible middle-grade authors to reveal our Best Books of the Year list and discuss how the authors come up with their ideas and turn them into titles kids love. You can find out more about the event in the red box below, and an adult can RSVP at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-BestBooks. We are looking forward to a fun and interesting discussion, and we hope to see you there!

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

Standing up for the environment



Edison, 13, Minnesota

"I recently spoke at a city council meeting about why my town should ban single-use Styrofoam. I explained how containers, trays, and cups made from Styrofoam harm the environment because they don't break down easily and can pollute lakes and rivers when they crumble into tiny pieces. My inspiration came from earning the Environmental Science Merit Badge through Boy Scouts this summer. Seeing nearby cities take this step encouraged me to ask our leaders to do the same. I learned that one voice can help spark change."

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK

What's the size of a hippo, yet weighs nothing at all?

Its reflection in the water

CHARITY OF THE WEEK

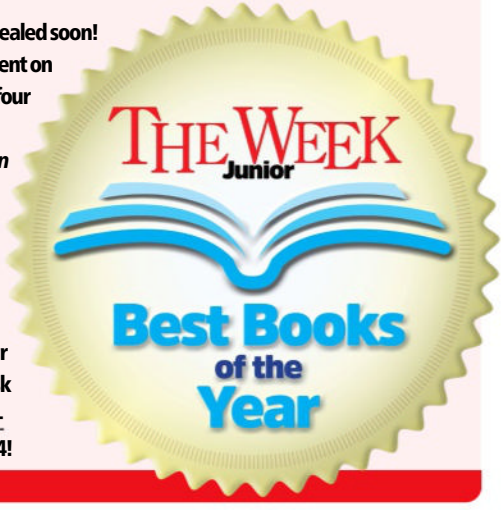
Braille Institute of America

This organization's mission is to improve the lives of people with blindness and low vision. It offers a variety of programs for people at all stages of vision loss. For example, it provides instruction on how people can live independently and be prepared for an emergency. It distributes more than 1 million Braille books and books for the visually impaired every year. Find out more at brailleinstitute.org.

Braille Institute

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL BOOK EVENT!

Our 2025 Best Books of the Year list will be revealed soon! To celebrate, we're hosting a special virtual event on December 4 at 7 p.m. ET. Attendees can meet four authors whose titles made the list: Derrick Barnes, author of *The Incredibly Human Henson Blayze*; Kate Messner, author of *The Trouble with Heroes*; and Raina Telgemeier and Scott McCloud, co-authors of *The Cartoonists Club*. Christina Soontornvat, author of *The Last Mapmaker*, will moderate the event. Find out how these amazing writers come up with their story ideas, illustrate their work, and more! Ask an adult to RSVP online at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-BestBooks. We hope to see you on December 4!



THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I was happy to see that hamsters were the Animal of the Week because I have one! His name is Universal, and he is 2 years old." Emmanuelle, 11, Oregon

"I am so excited to dance!" Anuvik, 10, Texas

"The magazine is one of my favorite things to read, so I had custom *The Week Junior* cookies at my birthday party!" Ella, 11, Georgia

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mrs. Wood**

School: **Hershey Elementary School**

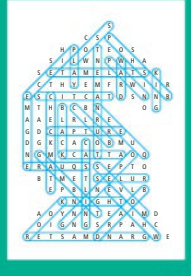
"Mrs. Wood always does the funniest voices. Whenever you come in with a sad face, Mrs. Wood makes you smile. Once we had a class award and we kept going back and forth between two choices, but Mrs. Wood let us both win. She has a knack for relating math to life stories, making math more fun and easier to learn. Mrs. Wood is the best teacher in the world."

Aya, 9, Pennsylvania

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: USPWS

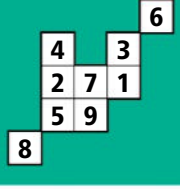
Puzzle answers (from page 26)

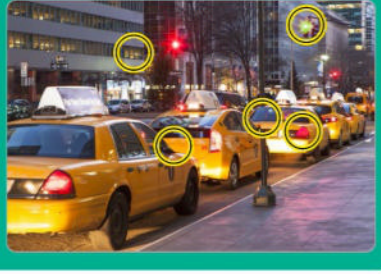


Word search
Unused letters: Chess was the first board game to be played in space.

Four in a row
dinosaur, dialogue
electric, lettuce

Fill in the blanks
1. tent, tenth
2. budge, budget
3. needles, needless





Quiz answers (from page 30)
1 c) $9.12 million **2** True **3** a) Gulf of California **4** A pleep **5** b) Phoenix **6** True **7** c) 2018 **8** Retirement home **9** a) Candy Castle **10** False. Males turn yellow. **11** c) Syria **12** Zay Harding **13** c) Rose Lavelle **14** False. It makes them less likely. **15** *Goodnight Moon*

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 How much did an original copy of a 1930 comic book featuring Superman recently sell for?

a) $5.12 million b) $7.12 million

c) $9.12 million

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 True or false? Scientists found that engaging in creative activities can help keep people's brains "young."

True ☐ False ☐

3 Researchers recently spotted a vaquita calf in which body of water?

a) Gulf of California b) Panama Canal

c) Caribbean Sea

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 In the video game Dinkum, what is an animal that's a cross between a sheep and a platypus called?

5 In what US city did the first driverless taxis begin operating?

a) Philadelphia b) Phoenix c) Portland

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? An ancient creature called Paraceratherium is believed to be the largest land mammal that ever lived.

True ☐ False ☐

7 In what year did US ice hockey star Hilary Knight win an Olympic gold medal?

a) 2010 b) 2014 c) 2018

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 In the book *Busted*, Oscar lives with his grandfather in what kind of facility?

1

6

10

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

13

9

9 In the board game Candy Land, the winner is the first player to reach which destination?

a) Candy Castle

b) Lollipop Woods

c) Gumdrop Mountains

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? During their breeding season, female Asian common toads turn yellow.

True ☐ False ☐

11 This year's International Children's Peace Prize winner is originally from which country?

a) Senegal b) Sudan

c) Syria

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

12 What is the name of the host of the television series *The Visioneers*?

13 Who scored the winning goal for Gotham FC in the National Women's Soccer League championship match?

a) Bruninha

b) Jaedyn Shaw

c) Rose Lavelle

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

14 True or false? According to a recent study, exposing babies to peanut products makes them more likely to develop allergies.

True ☐ False ☐

15 A hotel in Massachusetts re-created a room from which classic children's book?

THE WEEK Junior

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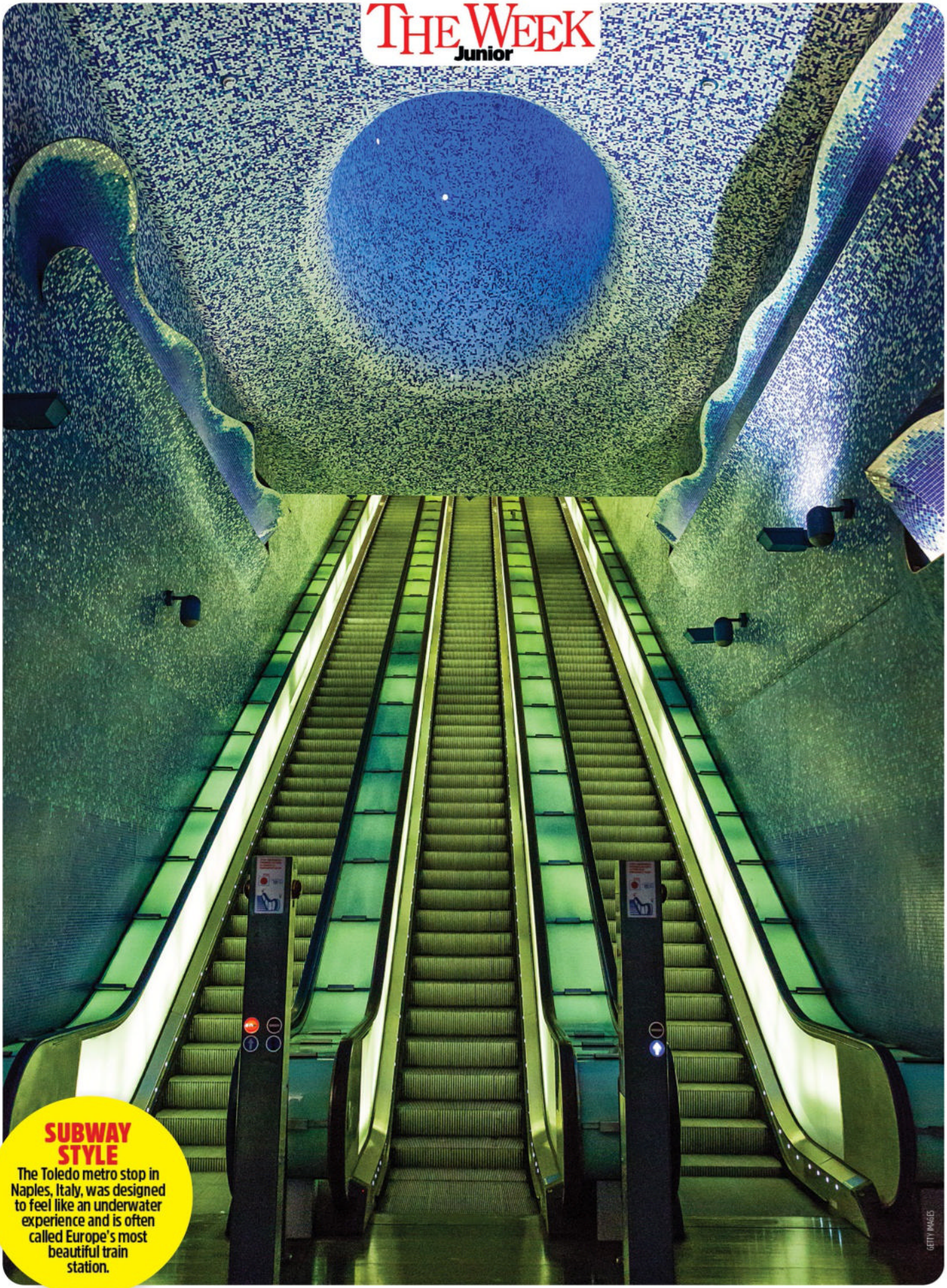

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SUBWAY STYLE

The Toledo metro stop in Naples, Italy, was designed to feel like an underwater experience and is often called Europe's most beautiful train station.